**How to Help and Support Impulsive Students**

From [Sue Watson](http://specialed.about.com/bio/Sue-Watson-9126.htm), former About.com Guide

**Ignore:** Know when it is appropriate to ignore the child who is impulsive. There will be times that ignoring isn't possible but remind yourself each time to ignore where appropriate or respond when not. Assess the situation quickly to make this determination.

**Respond Quickly:** When you see the child acting appropriately, be quick to catch and acknowledge this. Sometimes the impulsive child is merely looking for attention, it's always better to receive the attention for appropriate behaviors than inappropriate ones. Whether you're responding with a reward or a consequence, act quickly.

**Transition Times - Be on Guard:** For some reason, impulsivity seems to present itself more often in times of transition. Teaching appropriate behavior in times of transition is beneficial. You will also want to supervise carefully during transitional times. Again, dialogue with the student and let the student tell you what type of behavior should occur during transitional times. Sometimes reminders about consequences need to be addressed.

**Catch Them Doing It Right!:** This one goes a long way! The best way to curb inappropriate behavior is to acknowledge and praise appropriate behaviors. Remember, most behaviors are to seek attention. It is much more productive to give the attention and praise for the right behaviors than to have to reprimand and remind for the wrong behaviors. Sometimes a single compliment can go a long way.

**Seating Arrangement:** Impulsivity breeds impulsivity. Be sure to sit this child near a good role model. If this isn't possible, it is wise to keep the child in close proximity to the teacher.

**Behavior Contracts:** If impulsivity is a daily issue, it is wise to set the student up on a behavior contract. You know the saying - 'Set them up for success'. See the behavior contracts [here.](http://specialed.about.com/cs/behaviordisorders/a/behaviorcontrac.htm)

**Respond Only When the Child Raises a Hand:** This is important. Do not acknowledge the child who blurts out answers, after all you can't have 20 students blurting out answers. Sometimes this is tricky too but well worth it in the long run.

**In Summary:** Sometimes children who are extremely impulsive have another disorder or disability and impulsivity is a symptom of it ([ADD,](http://specialed.about.com/od/specialedacronyms/g/ADDgl.htm) [ODD](http://specialed.about.com/od/specialedacronyms/g/ODD.htm) etc.)However, with the implementation of a few relatively simple and straightforward strategies, these behaviors can be curbed to a certain extent. Sometimes is just the small changes in how a teacher approaches or responds to a students that makes all the difference in the world. If a child displays extreme impulsivity, you will one to identify one area at a time to work on. For instance, impulsivity often means:

* blurting out answers/responses before the question has even been complete or without putting up a hand;
* not waiting in lines or taking turns in both learning and play situations;
* interrupting others or intruding on others (butting in).

Decide on which behavior to change first and then implement the behavior contract and or the suggestions listed above.

As always, be patient. Changing inappropriate behaviors takes time and consistency but is worth every effort in the long run.